



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HOT TIPS FOR SUMMER FOOD SAFETY

Cook Food Carefully or Beware of Bad Bacteria

County of San Diego leaders, in partnership with the San Diego County Food Safety Advisory Council, today urged the public to use safe food practices for the summer grilling season.

Summertime barbecues and warm weather are here, but disease-causing bacteria also want to join the party. Food safety experts said cooks can make it tough on unwanted bacteria and minimize the chance of food borne illnesses by, for example, cooking ground beef to 157°F (69°C) and chicken to an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C).

"With July 4th celebrations right around the corner, it is important for everyone who is going to be cooking outdoors to think about food safety. You don't want to end your party with a food borne illness," said Gary Erbeck, Director, Department of Environmental Health (DEH). "Safely cooked food is a reasonable expectation, whether eating out or dining in. I am pleased to see the food industry working with government to educate County residents and ensure food safety."

"San Diego Food & Beverage businesses would like to remind our customers about handling food safely. Keep it cold, keep it hot or don't keep it at all," said Stephen Zolezzi, Executive Vice President of the Food & Beverage Association of San Diego.

"Be safe like the food experts and keep your cold foods cold and cook your foods to proper temperatures," said Gilbert Canizales, with the 500-member California Grocers Association.

"Many people know that poultry should be thoroughly cooked to reduce the potential for Salmonella," said Corina Santana-Allee, Supervising Environmental Health Specialist, DEH. "Cooking to 165°F (74°C) also reduces the probability of Campylobacter, another serious foodborne illness pathogen." She outlined the five key ingredients of food safety:

- **SAFE FOOD SOURCE:** Always purchase food from permitted vendors. Car trunks are not a permitted, approved source. Ensure the products are properly labeled.
- **CLEAN:** Everyone should wash his or her hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds. Wash the exterior of melons or other fruit before slicing.
- **SEPARATE:** Store raw meat, poultry and seafood so juices don't drip onto other foods. Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat or poultry.
- **COOK:** Get the thermometer ready or buy a new one. Cook meat products thoroughly and check with the thermometer. Don't guess on food safety temperatures for guests.
- **CHILL:** Don't over pack the refrigerator or the cooler. Ensure temperatures are at 41°F (5°C) or less. Refrigerate perishables, prepared foods and leftovers within two hours.

For additional information visit www.fightbac.org or www.foodsafety.gov

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